

IONIA
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY
2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Ionia Downtown Development Authority 2020 Annual Report

The City of Ionia Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is pleased to provide this Annual Report of its activities for the 2020 calendar year. This report is submitted pursuant to Section 6 of the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure for the DDA as adopted February 2009.

The Downtown Development Authority embarked on a number of initiatives during 2020 as recommended in the Blue Print Study, City of Ionia Master Plan, State of Michigan Project Rising Tide and Redevelopment Ready Communities program as they pertain to the DDA District. This report outlines the objectives and accomplishments of the DDA during the past year.

Organizational Structure and Board of Directors

The DDA Board of Directors shall be comprised of the Mayor and eight (8) members appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by City Council. At least five (5) of the members shall be persons having an interest in property located within the DDA District. At least one (1) of the members shall be a resident of the DDA District, if the DDA District has one hundred (100) or more persons residing in it. Each member shall serve a term of four (4) years but for the Mayor whose term shall coincide with his or her term as Mayor. An appointment to fill a vacancy shall be made by the Mayor, upon confirmation by the City Council, for the remainder of the unexpired term. Members of the Board shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses.

Current 2020 members of the Board of Directors are as follows:

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|----------------------------|---|
| • Mike Kirgis, Chairperson | Mike Kirgis Insurance Agency |
| • Dave Cook, Secretary | D.O.C. Properties |
| • Tim Hemenway, Treasurer | Michigan One Community Credit Union |
| • Margot Cook | Cook & Company / Downtown resident |
| • John Krueger | Ionia Lock and Key |
| • Paul Lentz | Edward Jones / Downtown resident |
| • Ted Paton | Ionia Career and Technical Education / Heartlands |
| • Chris Sorrell | Ventra Ionia Main LLC |
| • Mayor Daniel Balice | Ex-officio |

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors are held at City Hall on the third Wednesday of each month at 8:00AM. The Board of Directors also utilizes a Finance Committee which meets monthly. The Finance Committee, comprised of a small number of board members, is charged with monitoring the DDA and Ionia Theatre budgets, expenditures and other matters that financially impact the DDA and / or the Ionia Theatre.

Governor Whitmer placed a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order in accordance with COVID 19 Pandemic guidelines on March 24, 2020. The DDA office was officially closed to the general public and remained so through mid-June. The Ionia Theatre and Ionia Community Center / Armory gym area remained closed for the duration of the summer in accordance with the guidelines. During the upcoming months and through the remainder of 2020, businesses reduced hours of operation with some closing, numerous special events were cancelled and schools began providing virtual learning programming for students due to the Pandemic. Moving forward..... Many brick and mortar shops altered their business models and will continue to operate with new initiatives set in place. From developing e-commerce methods to curbside service, local retailers and restaurants continue to stay viable during the financial crisis. The DDA continues to work with stakeholders including, financial institutions, Chamber of Commerce, The Right Place, in addition to seeking state and federal grant funding opportunities to assist district businesses. The Ionia DDA assisted in the selection of businesses being awarded funds from the Michigan Small Business Relief Program. Ninety-seven applications were submitted by Ionia County businesses with only \$40,715 being allocated. Other funding programs included Michigan Disaster Loans, Match on Main, and another round for Small Business Relief efforts. The DDA also submitted grant applications on behalf of the District for local funding. The Right Place provided a series of ZOOM meetings designed to address business issues caused by the pandemic. A second program included workshops from the Re-engaging the Rural Community project. Each topic was pertinent to the re-opening of small businesses in rural communities.

The DDA worked with event leaders and organizations as activities were postponed or in some cases cancelled. Due to the pandemic, the DDA sponsored Michigan Wizard of Oz Festival and Ionia Fireworks Display were each cancelled. The DDA worked collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce on limited Christmas activities while new initiatives were created to counter balance the change in schedules of numerous area events.

Economic Development

MEDC / Community Development Projects:

Ionia was designated a low - moderate income community which allows for Community Development Block Grant funding and broadens the scope of grant opportunities. In cooperation with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the DDA supported grant programming for blight elimination, façade improvements, rental rehab, and building acquisition. The DDA is and will continue to be involved in the funding process of each of the new projects described below.

Project 1. Third Party Administrator Bruce Johnston / Revitalize LLC provided an overview of the upcoming downtown project utilizing MEDC grants, State of Michigan Historical Preservation credits, Brownfield, and other funding pertinent to the property. Purchased in 2020, a structure in the 300 block will be fully restored in 2021 utilizing façade and rental rehabilitation grant funds. The property will include a first floor commercial outlet and three residential units on the second floor. The basement will provide climate controlled storage areas. This property may be one of the state's leading historic restoration projects in 2021.

Project 2: A property purchased in the 400 block of Main Street is under consideration for façade and rental rehabilitation funding. Bruce Johnston / Revitalize LLC met with the new owner to discuss options and tour the property. This building and that of Project 1 may be submitted within a combined effort supporting a greater chance of success for each.

Redevelopment Ready Communities / RRC: The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) selected cities through an application process to participate in the statewide launch of the Redevelopment Ready Communities® program designed to assist local municipalities establish a sound foundation for redevelopment to occur. RRC is a certification program promoting effective redevelopment strategies. The program measures and then certifies communities that integrate transparency, predictability and efficiency into their daily development practices. The certification is a formal recognition that a community has a vision for the future and the fundamental practices in place to reach that threshold. Communities must commit by participating in assessments, workshops, and evaluations followed by a report of findings that outline recommendations and actions for best practice criteria. Future grant funding administered by MEDC is only awarded to cities engaged or certified by the Redevelopment Ready Communities program. Ionia became fully engaged in the program in April 2017 and began the process of alignment with the Best Practices as required by the project. In July 2020, Ionia became the 46th Michigan city to reach certification. A second phase of the program assists in identifying three to five priority development sites within the city. The selected parcels will receive a full report detailing potential for development which will be showcased on the MEDC website, City of Ionia website and provided to interested parties. The DDA will continue to collaborate with the RRC Team providing pertinent information on each site as required. Additional economic development opportunities to be announced in the future and will be limited to RRC certified communities only.

Ionia Community Library: Mercantile Bank announced plans to officially donate their historic downtown property to the Ionia Community Library on January 13, 2021. Discussions in 2020 led to the decision which will support the move of the Library to the historic building located at 302 W Main Street. The building will be retrofitted to serve the Library's needs and serve the community. A millage proposal will be presented to cover costs related to the project.

Steele Street Corridor: The south Steele Street Corridor reconstruction project began in July and was completed in late October. Improvements included but were not limited to replacement of water mains, sanitary sewer mains and storm sewer mains. New concrete curb and gutter, in addition to commercial business driveways were replaced. Steele Street was reduced from three lanes to two with sidewalks set at a width of ten feet. Access to all businesses remained open for the duration of the project. Ornamental trees will be placed in proposed locations along the corridor in 2021. The DDA promoted the businesses located along the corridor during the project through added signage, newsletters, mass emails, etc.

The Right Place: The DDA met on several occasions with the area's Right Place representative to discuss downtown revitalization, district property development and the program's new rural development initiative. The Right Place was the lead on several State and Federal COVID 19 related grant funding initiatives presented during the year. Countywide DDA Directors worked closely with the organization on each of the grant funding programs. The Right Place selected teams from each of the represented areas to review applications and make recommendations for limited grant funding. A second round of funding was released later in 2020 and the team again reviewed numerous small business applications.

Small Business Relief Initiatives: The Pure Michigan Small Business Relief Initiative and Michigan Small Business Restart programming utilized state and federal funding to assist businesses disproportionately impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. The first round of funding targeted:

- Restaurants, bars and other food / beverage service providers
- Travel and tourism destinations including lodging providers and hospitality businesses
- Live event venues and movie theaters
- Conference and meeting facilities
- Ice skating rinks, indoor water parks and bowling centers
- Gyms, fitness centers and indoor recreation facilities

Project Rising Tide: Housing, broadband, and downtown development initiatives set in the 2019 PRT programming continued in 2020 with committee meetings held via ZOOM. Aligning with the broadband strategic plan, YCD Electronics placed a WIFI repeater on their business storefront allowing for coverage within the downtown. The system allows for downtown visitors to access internet, share photos and messaging.

Match on Main: The Ionia DDA submitted a grant application for the State of Michigan Match on Main program in early 2020. Brick and mortar businesses were targeted for the program. Funding for this program was extremely limited with awards directed to larger cities within Michigan's Region 4. A second Match on Main program to be released in 2021.

Public Act 57 Compliance: Downtown Development Authorities must hold two informational meetings annually for the purpose of informing the public of the goals and direction of the Authority, including projects to be undertaken in the upcoming year. Full reporting of the current development plan, projects, investments, promotional campaigns, annual financial reporting, contractual agreements, and review of expenditures are contained within the presentation as part of the mandate for transparency requirements. The report is not for the purpose of voting on policy, budgets or other operational matters. As required, notice of the meeting shall be posted on the City website, City Hall lobby area, DDA office in addition to being sent directly to the County Clerk and City Clerk. In cooperation with the City's Finance Director, the DDA met all Public Act 57 Compliance requirements.

Orchard View Industrial Park: MEDC awarded a grant to the City of Ionia for the creation of a full economic development marketing package for the Industrial Park in 2019 with the project being transferred to the DDA in September 2020. The DDA made initial contact with the marketing firm for development of a site plan package for the park including maps, general lot descriptions, incentive programming, infrastructure, drone footage, and investment opportunities. Once completed, the package will be placed on the City and MEDC websites in addition to being shared with economic development groups within the region. The DDA will prepare all grant reporting documents for the project as required.

Discover Ionia website: Earnest Enterprises of Ionia worked with the DDA in 2020 to create a tourism based website announcing upcoming events and activities while promoting local destination sites to viewers. The official launch of site was set for January 2021.

City of Ionia Master Plan: Under the provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and working under the direction of Main Street Planning, the City of Ionia and Planning Commission completed the Master Plan in late 2019. The Downtown Development Authority continued to complete the list of goals and action items as recommended in the plan during 2020.

They included:

Goal 1. Improve the appearance of buildings in the DDA District through continued revitalization efforts. Such efforts will help preserve the architectural character of historic structures and encourage additional retail and residential development within the district.

- Continue the Downtown Façade Program by identifying sources of funding for façade / building improvement projects (i.e. façade improvement grant funds, low interest loans, etc.).
- Establish design guidelines for the DDA District which will identify appropriate materials, signage, etc. for use in improvement / development projects. Incorporate these guidelines as a part of a greater unified design scheme for the DDA District. Require adherence to these guidelines for façade improvements and other development-related incentives provided by the DDA.
- Identify façade / building improvement projects for the DDA district.
- Identify architectural styles that will complement the existing character of the downtown area. Consider contemporary styles that may blend with existing historic architecture. Require that improvements to downtown structures be reviewed by an architectural committee comprised of interested businesspersons and members of the DDA Board. Consider requiring review by the architectural committee for structures in the DDA district prior to a building permit being issued for the project; recommendations may be advisory only or may be a condition of receiving a building permit.

Goal 2. Gateway Site Development. Complete the construction of the Gateway Park project on the vacant property owned by the DDA at the northeast corner of Main Street and Dexter Street.

- Determine potential sources of funding for the Gateway Park project, including local grant agencies, DDA funds, and private sponsorships or donations.
- Create and implement a timeline for site development.

Goal 3. Identify and implement initiatives to aid in the rehabilitation and development of residential units within the DDA district.

- Develop and implement a residential rental rehabilitation program.

- Identify and pursue additional initiatives available to rehabilitate residential units within the downtown. Communicate information about such programs and initiatives to current and potential property owners in the DDA District.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for the development of additional residential units in the DDA District. This plan should include potential development sites and examples of contemporary architecture which will complement the historic character of the DDA district, as identified in Goal 1 of this section.
- Identify parcels in the downtown area where “Missing Middle” housing (Attached Urban Housing) may be a compatible and desirable use for development and redevelopment. Attached Urban Housing which may include duplexes, fourplexes, and multiplexes of a small scale as well as bungalow courts, townhouse, and carriage houses. Develop ordinance language and a review process which will help insure compatibility with existing land uses.
- Review and amend the requirements of the B-2 Community Business District (downtown) to permit the conversion of existing buildings to condominium ownership units and rental units, including street level dwelling units, to increase the number of downtown residents.

Goal 4. Undertake marketing efforts to inform users of the Fred Meijer Grand River Rail Trail of the businesses, services and attractions within the community.

- Develop signs and brochures which can be placed at a trail head kiosk.

Goal 5. Steele Street Corridor Re-development.

- Coordinate the Tax Increment Financing and Development Plan with a plan for the long term redevelopment of the Steele Street Corridor which includes commercial and residential development and recreational opportunities.
- Work with the Planning Commission on its implementation of the sub-area plan for the Steele Street Corridor as property acquisition and re-development opportunities arise.

Goal 6. Construct Public Restrooms Downtown.

- Identify location(s) for public restrooms within the DDA District, secure funding for design and construction. Coordinate with plans to locate a central gathering plaza and amphitheater in the downtown area.

Goal 7. Ionia Theatre Preservation and Improvements

- Allocate adequate funding for the preservation of the DDA owned Theatre. Provide funding for ongoing maintenance, seating upgrades, and stage improvements as identified.

Goal 8. Downtown Area Development.

- Plan for and implement land use and development policies that support and expand upon the key strengths of the downtown area.
- Plan for activities and spaces in the downtown area that will support restaurants and food service opportunities patronized by both residents and visitors to Ionia.
- Preserve the governmental and functions that contribute to the vitality of the downtown area; support plans for expansion of these uses where appropriate, including plans for adequate parking and pedestrian access.
- Provide a central gathering location in or near the downtown such as a plaza for special events, festivals, and leisure-time gathering which will contribute to the vitality of the downtown and assist in retention of businesses; increase the types of special events to appeal to a broad range of residents and visitors to Ionia.
- Plan for continued recreational activities in or near the downtown, utilizing existing facilities such as the Armory, the Fred Twaites Grand River Rail Trail, the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail, and City playgrounds, while planning for new recreational facilities in the Steele Street Corridor area or other locations as identified.
- Enhance both pedestrian access and biking facilities in the downtown to preserve the opportunity to explore the downtown area for both residents and visitors alike.
- Analyze opportunities for public parking in the downtown area; identify parking issues which may occur during existing or expanded special events; prepare a public information program utilizing the City of Ionia website and DDA website informing the public of parking opportunities, in order to help clarify whether parking issues exist or if the perception of parking issues exists.
- Research the expense and logistics of providing free WI-FI in the downtown area.

Goal 9. Ionia Community Library New Construction in the Steele Street Corridor.

- Continue to support the activities of the new Ionia Community Library as a vital component of the downtown. Coordinate where possible to enhance both the Library's activities and the activities of the DDA.

Economic Development Component

Goal 1. Business Recruitment / Retention. Lead efforts to retain businesses in the DDA District and outside the DDA boundaries, while simultaneously recruiting new businesses.

- Work with current businesses to identify their needs, assist in their growth, and when necessary, their continued expansion within the DDA District and in other locations throughout the City.
- Regularly assess and develop business recruitment and retention materials. Maintain a regular campaign to recruit new businesses to the area and increase the usage of space in the downtown district. Include information about available properties, incentives, and various business resources.
- Determine the need for a business incubator program to provide opportunities for new business startups in the downtown; consider a special millage grant program as a funding source.
- Continually identify and funding sources available and communicate the information to current and potential businesses.
- Maintain a list of available properties within the downtown and in other areas in the City; make this list available on the DDA web page and City of Ionia website.
- Continue the pop-up shops program through the DDA, offering short term leases, business plans, marketing support, and accounting support.
- Offer education to the local business community annually regarding grant funding opportunities, business plans, accounting programs, marketing, and promotion development.
- Work with the Ionia County Economic Alliance (ICEA) and The Right Place, Inc. to attract and retain business and industry to the City of Ionia.

Goal 2. Business Marketing

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the DDA District, focusing on events, businesses, and its unique distinct and historic character. Assist existing businesses with their own marketing efforts, as a part of a coordinated marketing strategy for the DDA District.
- Create and publish a downtown guide and distribute throughout the region.
- The DDA and the Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce will continue to cooperate to market the area through special events, festivals, and fundraisers in order to promote the area as a business friendly and vibrant community.
- Maintain a directory of businesses located within the downtown and in other locations in the City of Ionia; include a list of industrial businesses as well; publish on the DDA website, Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce website, City of Ionia website, and organizational newsletters that either mailed, emailed, or published on websites.
- Maintain regular communication with the local media about current DDA and Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce events, projects, and educational activities as part of an effort to make the community and business owners more aware of the mission of both organizations. Purchase advertisement campaigns where applicable. Utilize DDA, Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Ionia newsletters, publications, websites and web pages for regular updates of events, projects, and educational activities.

Goal 3. Downtown Events.

- Increase the number of events taking place in the DDA District in order to support local businesses.
- Continue assisting with coordinating events taking place in the downtown, including: the Ionia Farmers' Market, Autumn Celebration, Free Fair Parade, Main Street Electric Christmas Parade, Ionia Fireworks Display, and other events. Add new events to complement the existing schedule, including those that are family friendly.
- Continue current cooperative efforts with the Ionia Free Fair Association.
- Provide a central gathering location in or near the downtown such as a plaza for special events, festivals, and leisure time gathering which will contribute to the vitality of the downtown and assist in retention of businesses; increase the types of special events to appeal to a broad range of residents and visitors to Ionia.

Steele Street Corridor Plan

Goal 1. Steele Street Corridor Redevelopment.

- Establish a plan for the long term redevelopment of the Steele Street Corridor which includes commercial and residential development; and recreational opportunities.
- Implement the amended Steele Street Corridor Plan development and redevelopment, as property acquisition and redevelopment opportunities arise.

Industrial Land Use

Goal 1. Maintain the existing industrial land uses in the City; market and promote existing sites and consider new sites in the downtown area; provide a range of opportunities within land zoned for industrial land use to reflect current market trends.

- Review permitted uses and uses allowed by special land use in the I-1 Light Industrial District to determine if additional uses and mixes of uses may be proposed as amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Consider non-conventional uses of industrial space such as breweries with sale and service of products and food items; exercise facilities; day care; event spaces; and other uses may be identified.
- Consider rezoning lands with suitable structures, particularly historic structures, in the downtown to I-1 Light Industrial, or add permitted uses to the B-2 Community Business District, to promote technology-based research and development land uses, pursue financing to lease, purchase, or rehabilitate sites that are particularly attractive to start-up businesses.
- Identify infrastructure such as broadband necessary to support technological industries; work to develop a strategic plan to attract and retain technological sector industries.
- Identify infrastructure necessary to support health care industries; work to develop a strategic plan to attract and retain health care sector industries and support industries.

Five Year Community Parks and Recreation Plan:

The five year Community Parks and Recreation Plan 2019-2024 was adopted on January 8, 2019.

Geographical areas included in the plan and also located within the DDA District include:

- Ionia Free Fair Grounds and Riverside Park
- Trailhead Park for Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail
- Downtown Development Authority Gateway Plaza
- Armory Community Center
- Fred Thwaites Grand River Trail (portion)
- Ionia Skate Park
- A segment of the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail and walkway bridge spanning Dexter Street (M-66)
- Steele Street Corridor Plan

Special Events, Festivals and Outdoor Experiences Provide a Sense of Place

Statistics show that continued special events create guest destination sites, attract new residents, promote investment and support economic growth. Every small community develops its own sense of place by providing friendly areas for families to gather, special events appealing to a broad audience and creating a small town ambiance that will create memories for generations. Included are a few of the past year's highlights that made Ionia a destination for many and an enhanced sense of pride for its residents.

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, numerous 2020 special events and activities were postponed, cancelled or greatly modified. The DDA directed event organizers to speak with the Ionia County Health Department and Ionia Public Safety to plan accordingly.

Cancelled / postponed / modified events and activities:

- Memorial Day Parade
- Ionia Crusin' Classic Car and Truck Show
- Music on the Green
- Ionia Fireworks Display
- Ionia Free Fair
- Autumn Celebration and Chili Dawg Challenge
- Ionia County Historical Society Upstairs Downtown Tours
- Electric Christmas Parade and tree lighting activities, Santa events, and Christmas movie

Michigan Wizard of Oz Festival: The Michigan Wizard of Oz Festival was created in an effort to attract visitors to the community and showcase the shopping district. The Official Characters and committee created an on-line virtual festival that was welcomed by many. Plans for the 2021 event are underway.

Hometown Holidays and Electric Christmas Parade: Due to COVID 19, the annual Hometown Holidays and Electric Christmas Parade were cancelled. The DDA and Chamber partnered to present "Christmas on the Bricks", a promotion highlighting brick and mortar shops located in the downtown area. The local residential decorating contest and the downtown business decorating contest was expanded and re-named "Twinkle Town" and "Twinkle Downtown". A special Saturday evening open house for shopping and Christmas light tours brought shoppers to the downtown district. Generous sponsors provided support to host Christmas on the Bricks and special activities. Santa joined the Chamber of Commerce and DDA Director to light the Christmas tree – presented by video on FB. The official downtown Christmas tree was placed at the intersection of Depot and Main Street adding to the ambiance of the holidays. The DDA provides the lights for the tree with DPW staff placing and maintaining the system.

Farmers' Market: The 2020 Farmers' Market was host to a number of area produce vendors each Wednesday and Saturday, June through September. The DDA partnered with Michigan Department of Agriculture by offering the Project Fresh / Market Fresh WIC and Senior Project Fresh programs that assisted patrons with reduced produce purchase costs. Vendors were reimbursed through state programs supporting each initiative. Participated in on-line webinar training for the Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance program as required for all Market Masters. Discussions began in late 2020 regarding the potential for the DDA to work with a newly organized group to oversee Market programming. Operating agreements would be created between the City of Ionia / DDA in addition to the DDA / newly formed non-profit organization. It is the desire of each group to revitalize the Farmers' Market while expanding community activities within the pavilion.

Small Business Saturday: The DDA submitted an application to become an official "Small Business Saturday Community" for the seventh consecutive year. Sponsored by American Express, select communities received promotional banners, door mats, posters, and tote bags to be distributed to downtown businesses for participating in the event scheduled for the Saturday following Thanksgiving. Many of the area businesses noted an increase in retail sales from last year's event. The "Buy Nearby" shopping campaign was created by the Michigan Retailers and held in early October. The DDA participated in the event and marketed local first shopping in various media outlets.

Mural Project: The Ionia Mural Project was placed on hold for several months during 2019 as the original artist relocated out of state. The brick tuck pointing of the exterior brick wall was also an issue due to the cost and scheduling of a contractor. Committee member Linda Ciangi and DDA Director Linda Curtis met with a second artist to discuss future plans. Following several meetings and lengthy discussions, a decision was made to seek a formal plan from artist Daniel Arens. Mr. Arens has completed numerous works within the Clinton County area. His technique of placing the mural on aluminum panels which are then attached to the brick exterior removes the need for tuck pointing, saving time and costs for the Ionia project. A sketch was provided to the DDA Board of Directors in 2020 for their review and approval was granted to move forward. The completion of the mural was again held back in 2020 due to COVID 19. The mural will be placed in spring of 2021 bringing a sense of place to the downtown area which will promote tourism and economic development.

Ionia Theatre: COVID 19 guidelines and stay at home orders resulted in the Ionia Theatre being closed for most of 2020. Curbside food services allowed for customers to continue to purchase concessions afterhours and on weekends. Movie releases were limited – again due to COVID. Funding for repairs and maintenance remained current through the general fund.

Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Trail System and Bridge: The Trail System was enjoyed by visitors and residents alike throughout the year. Walkers, runners, cyclists and snow shoe enthusiasts utilized the trail system making it a key destination point for the City. A full calendar of holidays and community events with coordinating bridge light patterns was created for the lighting component and is maintained by Theatre Manager Gary Ferguson in cooperation with the DDA.

Trailhead Park for the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail: Construction for the new park began in 2018 and finalized in 2019. Located on the corner of Dexter Street and Adams Street, this family friendly site offers a splash pad, bike racks, picnic area, playground equipment and public restrooms. Due to its central proximity, the park offers easy access from street level and also from the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail system. The park had limited access during 2020 due to the pandemic.

Sidewalk Cafés: The DDA offers the opportunity for Main Street restaurants to host outdoor seating during the summer months to further enhance the atmosphere of downtown Ionia and their businesses. The DDA requires the completion of an application process prior to approval being granted.

DDA Promotion and Marketing

City of Ionia Website: News relating to DDA sponsored events / activities in addition to board meeting agendas and minutes for the same were posted on City of Ionia website.

DDA Newsletter: The DDA Newsletter showcases activities, events and projects within the community. The newsletter is distributed through the DDA email contact listing, placed on the City of Ionia website and is also available in hard copy.

Radio: In past years, the DDA promoted the District through an interactive radio segment for WION I-1430 on a monthly basis for the annual cost of \$1,200. Information regarding special events, ordinance updates, projects and more were shared with listeners. Due to COVID 19 guidelines, programming was greatly decreased.

Meetings / Seminars / Educational Training

Director Training: Participated in continuing educational webinars and workshops relating to business development, festival / special event management, promotion / marketing, planning and zoning, business recruitment, grant writing, etc. All were via teleconference or ZOOM. Attended the Michigan Downtown Association Conference virtually in November.

DDA District Meetings: Due to the Pandemic, informational meetings and workshops were postponed and / or provided virtually in 2020. Trainings in cooperation with the Michigan Small Business Development Center were postponed and will be featured in 2021. Director maintained contact with business owners via conference calls, messaging and in person while following CDC guidelines.

Downtown Beautification and Maintenance

Dumpster Program: The DDA continues the downtown dumpster program for businesses / rental units located on the south side of Main Street in the 300 block in addition to limited businesses on the north side of the 400 block. Dumpsters are maintained by Granger Container.

Flowers / Plantings / Trees / Lampposts: Integrity Tree Service continues to treat the Autumn Blaze Pear trees located in the downtown for Fire Blight. Spring brought the blooming of daffodils, tulips and other plantings showcasing the downtown. The DDA continued downtown beautification efforts by providing funding for the annual flowers that grace many of the downtown streets. Large urns of flowering plants are also placed throughout the district. The DDA now oversees the ordering of flowers and plantings for the curb jets, entrance to the fairgrounds, and decorative urns.

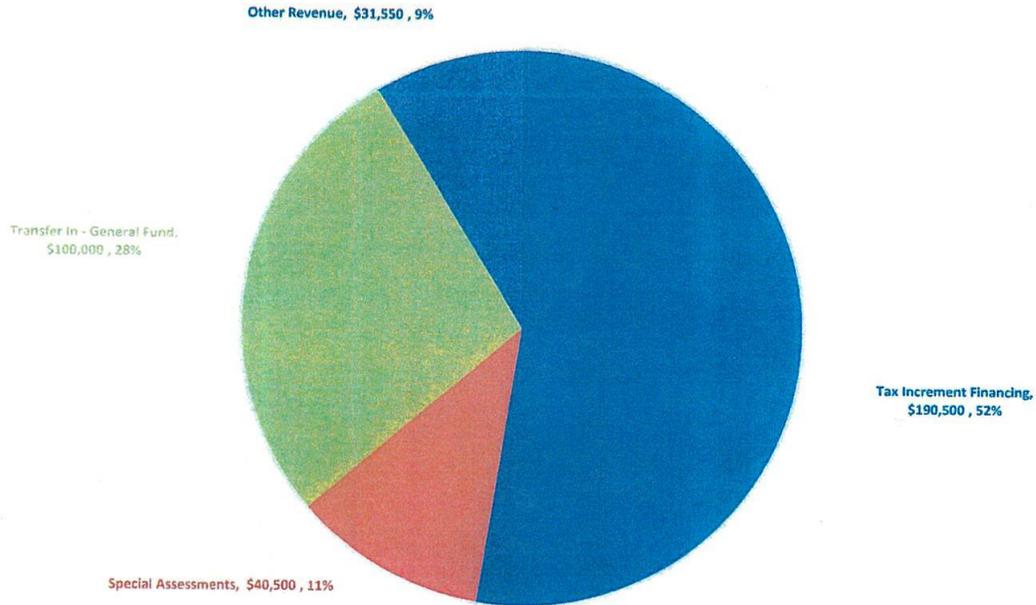


DDA Director Community Involvement / Participation and Downtown Updates

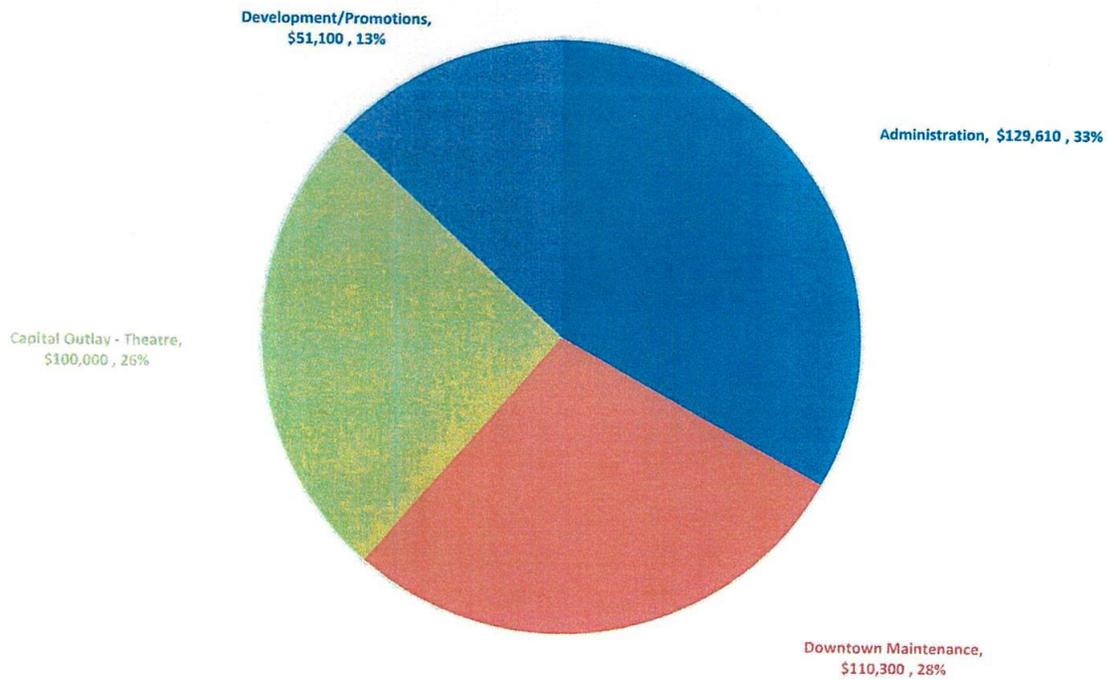
As DDA Director, I participated in or assisted with the following activities during 2020. Due to the increased participation in the Project Rising Tide initiative and the Redevelopment Ready Community Certification programming, my availability for committee involvement was decreased during 2020. In person meetings were also minimized due to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

- Participated in continuing education webinars relating to business development, festival / special event management, promotion / marketing, public relations, business recruitment, grant writing, and philanthropic management, etc.
- Maintained working relations with DDA businesses and property owners – via phone, ZOOM meetings and email. All in-person meetings were made within CDC guidelines.
- Member of the Ionia Community Collaborative which meets monthly to discuss countywide initiatives and programming centered on health, wellness and workforce development for residents. Meetings held via ZOOM.
- Member of the Professional Business Women’s Association – Ionia.
- Develop new events to create a destination atmosphere for the downtown area. Strive to enhance current events and activities.
- Attended virtual workshops / trainings related to community development including:
 - Redevelopment Ready Communities / RRC programming.
 - Michigan Municipal League Winter Strategies COVID Response virtual studies for downtown and business district leaders.
 - Michigan Association of Planning virtual studies including a series of workshops focused on small communities who have experienced a negative financial impact due to COVID.
 - Michigan Downtown Association – two full days of virtual workshops in November.
 - The Right Place roundtables:
 - Activating Rural Entrepreneurship
 - Innovation and Talent Retention / Attraction
 - Redevelopment Ready Communities: First Impressions Tourism programming.
- Planning Commission meetings via ZOOM.
- Assisted as requested with community fundraisers and special programs.
- Numerous meetings with the area’s Right Place representative relating to workforce development, new business attraction, etc.
- Collaborated with the Ionia Chamber of Commerce Director to implement shared / partnered activities to strengthen both entities.
- DDA business updates:
 - Wilson’s Heating Cooling and Plumbing began construction of their new north M-66 location. The official move from Main Street in 2020.
 - Heart Beat Music opened the doors to their new business located at 341 W Main Street. In addition to selling musical instruments, vocal lessons were also be provided.
 - Leading Edge Escape Room located at 200 W Main offers themed escape games in addition to axe throwing competitions.
 - 317 W Main offered the Smash Room and Crafty Kitchen Creations Bakery prime downtown locations.
 - Auction Addict’s Attic opened in late 2020 at their new 221 W Main Street location. From antiques to furniture and gifts, the retail business offers something for all ages.
 - Salon 6 expanded its services by opening Spa and Wellness at 318 W Main Street.
 - The Kitchen Cookbook shares a storefront with the established Barb’s Bargains located at 427 W Main Street.
 - Pocket Change opened at 421 W Adams Street. The business offers gently used clothing, furniture and home goods.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REVENUES
2020-2021: \$362,550



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY EXPENDITURES
2020-2021: \$391,010





DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
Annual Report of Expenditures - DDA Project Fund
Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Prepared Pursuant to Section 884.11 of the City Code of Ordinances

REVENUES

Special Assessments (2 Mill Property Tax Levy - DDA District)	\$40,060.83
Tax Increment Financing	\$10,589.54
Local Community Stabilization Funds	\$179,020.44
Charges	\$818.00
Miscellaneous	\$14,852.94
Interest Income	\$54.53
Contributions from Gen Fund	<u>\$210,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$455,396.28

EXPENDITURES

Administration	\$127,437.11
DDA District Maintenance	\$126,811.64
DDA District Development/Promotion	\$20,611.25
Contributions to Theatre	<u>\$200,808.59</u>
TOTAL	\$475,688.59

INDEBTEDNESS

The DDA Fund has no outstanding debt.

ASSESSED VALUE

Initial Assessed Value in the DDA District (Base Year – 1989)	\$23,046,100
Current Assessed Value in the DDA District (2018)	\$20,282,191
Captured Assessed Value to Support DDA Activities	(\$2,763,909)

FUND DEFICIT/FUND BALANCE

DDA Fund – Fund Balance as of July 1, 2019	\$53,536.44
DDA Fund – Fund Balance as of June 30, 2020	\$33,264.13